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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000665

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EUR/NCE FOR ERIC FICHTE

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECHS AGREE PROCEDURAL ISSUES SHOULD BE FOCUS OF
FIRST UNHRC SESSION

REF: A. STATE 94561

[B](#). STATE 78740

[C](#). PRAGUE 00621

[D](#). STATE 85722

Classified By: Charge Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Czech MFA Director of Human Rights said the Czechs plan to make procedural reform the focus of their one-year term on the Council, and further agree that the focus of the first UNHRC session should be procedural issues. However, they are open to discussing specific country issues if necessary to ensure the good faith cooperation by all UNHRC members. In addition, they are generally supportive of the U.S. positions on UNHRC procedures, including the agenda, the need to extend mandates for one year, the need to reform special procedures, and the need for an effective Universal Periodic Review. On related topics, the Director confirmed the Czechs have not adopted a position on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and have not yet determined whether they will support Professor Ruth Wedgwood for the Human Rights Committee. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Acting DCM and Poloff met June 14 with Veronika Stromsikova, Czech MFA Director of Human Rights, to discuss the first session of the UN Human Rights Council (Ref A) and the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Refs B, C). They also discussed the re-election of Professor Ruth Wedgwood (Ref D).

First UNHRC Session

[1](#)3. (C) Stromsikova agreed that, ideally, the first session of the UNHRC should focus on procedural issues. Many EU countries agree. However, several Arab countries have announced a plan to introduce text for a resolution on the occupied territories. The Czechs will urge UNHCR members to set aside such country-specific issues until procedural issues are settled, and they are prepared to wait before submitting text for a resolution on Cuba. However, the Czechs believe a cooperative start for the session is crucial for the UNHRC's long-term success, and therefore would agree to consider country-specific issues if necessary to achieve such a start. Also, Stromsikova predicted the UNHRC will need to address certain critical country-specific issues, such as Sudan, in the second session in September.

[1](#)4. (C) Stromsikova said the Czechs plan to focus on procedural issues during their one-year term on the UNHRC.

Czech priorities include special procedures, the 1503 procedure, subcommittee reform, and the Universal Periodic Review. In a separate meeting to discuss unrelated issues, Ivana Grollova, Czech MFA Asia Department's Head of the Far East and Pacific Unit (and formerly of the UN Department), mentioned other issues of possible interest to the Czechs, including (a) the right for the UNHRC to make recommendations directly to the UNSC, (b) the process for decision making, and (c) ways to encourage UNHRC members accept responsibility for human rights conditions in their own countries.

15. (C) On the agenda, Stromsikova said Chile has prepared a draft that is acceptable to the Czechs.

16. (C) Stromsikova said the issue of special procedures is a top priority for the Czechs. They believe the number of rapporteurs should be maintained, and that special procedures governance should be supported by other UN structures to resolve problems such as the inability of the Burma rapporteur to enter that country.

17. (C) Stromsikova said the Czechs also support: (a) extensions of CHR mandates (which she believed are automatic), (b) open-ended working groups, (c) NGO participation, and (d) Universal Periodic Review (UPR), although Stromsikova was not optimistic that it would be effective. The Czech will urge the UNHRC to avoid establishing a document-intensive UPR procedure as they believe it would burden developing countries.

18. (U) Stromsikova said that deputy FM Jaroslav Basta would lead the Czech delegation to the UNHRC session on June 19.

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Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous People

19. (C) Stromsikova confirmed the Czechs neither support nor oppose the draft Declaration (Ref C). However, while the Czechs would be content if it is never adopted, they will not block consensus if the other EU member states agree to support the Declaration.

Candidacy of Wedgwood

10. (SBU) Stromsikova said the Czechs will consider Professor Wedgwood for the Human Rights Committee, although they must evaluate the entire field of candidates before deciding whom to support. The Czechs will make their decision known two weeks prior to the election. A decision this position may also be linked to a possible Czech candidacy for a renewed UNHRC seat.
DODMAN